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A SHORT STREET.

To span, to grasp, to delineate the great Babylon! If the Thames were ink instead of foul water, and the Monument a pen in the guidance of powerful mind capacious enough to wield it, it would exhaust the one to the 'verdant mud,' and wear out the other to the stump or pedestal, to tell the millionth part of the story of London and its inhabitants. It may be very well to throw a loose glance, as if from the cross of St Paul's, over the vast theatre and its moving myriads, seeing nothing distinctly of the human ant-hills and emmetts stirring about so furiously, and toiling and struggling below. There is wonder enough for grand description in that one *coup d'œil*, but it must be imaginative and Asmodean; and, matter-of-fact man as I am, even one of the longer thoroughfares would be too much for my photographic, not panoramic, ken. The weary Strand would wreck my voyage; the shop-clad Oxford Street I must leave to a Clarendon Press; the butcherly Whitechapel, to the newspaper writers of 'thrilling' tales; turtle-tainted Bishopsgate Street, to the benefit of clergy; and Piccadilly—ah, would it were worthy of its pastoral name and floral associations!—to its displays of fashion and mysteries of politics; for the Hay-market has ceased to exhibit hay, Hedge Lane has disappeared, and Peccadilloes disgrace the scene where childhood and innocence whilom sported amid kindred blossoms.

I must choose a smaller subject for my microscope. Well, here is a short street, though called 'Great,' to distinguish it from a namesake or continuation inscribed 'Little'; but Little has nearly thirty tenements, and Great not fifty. The two run across a famous and perplexing circus yclept the Seven Dials, a much-frequented, though not very aristocratic or fashionable locality. It was here the poor French emigrant dwelt, who described it as the seven D—ls, where every street ran away from each other, and he dined sumptuously for a penny on 'Ca-me—not very fat, but very good meat though.' A poor author must be interested in such a spot, and behold me surveying it!

The first thing that struck me in the general aspect of the place was the number and variety of animals, principally birds, which were exposed for sale at about an average of every fifth shop, but in several cases two or three close together, and forming a perfect menagerie of discordant music, noise, and clamour. These denizens of the grove, the kennel, the tropics, the rivers, the earth, the eyry, the pond, the roadside, the dwelling-house, and the ruin, composed a

curious aggregate; and it seemed equally strange that they could all live in such quarters, or that anybody could live by them. Imagine hundreds of cages, many of them but three or four inches square, filled with canaries, larks, linnets, and every variety of singing-bird; some with single tenants, and some with a dozen or a score, all in motion, and making some sort of sound, from a chirrup to a note, and a whistle to a scream. In the next assortment, pigeons and rabbits prevailed the most, and were silent. Not so game-cocks and their ladies, dunghills and their partlets, bantams and their wee partners. Here moaned the turtle-doves, and, closely adjoining, grunted the guinea-pigs. Here the swift hawk darted his bold eye, and at his elbow, a box of slow tortoises cared not for his impious glance; neither, indeed, did the smallest finch that perched within a pounce of his wire-restricted claws. There was great equality and perfect independence throughout the whole territory. If not the Happy Family, they could not get at one another to quarrel, which, considering the (reputed) opiate means taken to make the family happy, is probably the happiest condition of the two. With skill to purchase—but that might be unnecessary, as one of the merchants assured me that all there was 'upon honour'—you might apparently possess yourself of the articles cheaper than I expected. For example, a lively young lark, with a turf to boot, could not be very dear at the market-price of 6d.; a cock-linnet, warranted, 3d.; a canary in full song, 3s. 6d. (in genteeler quarters, where they are bred so taper as to pass through ladies' rings, they cost guineas, and don't sing so flush); a bullfinch, 5s. 6d.; turtle, 5s.; fantail pigeons, 5s.; jacobins, 5s.; and carriers, 10s. a pair. Parrots, to be sure, had no fixed price. Free-trade—when the greys were in office—had been the ruin of that green crop and yellow monopoly. The rabbits also, a numerous colony, were of uncertain value, from half-a-crown to a sovereign. To the latter estimate belonged a large couple, with ears that would have done honour to a jackass for length, and which drooped like a weeping willow; these were pronounced remarkably cheap in consequence of the female having a 'dewlap' about the size of an orange, which I mistook for a disagreeable and killing tumour, upon her throat. I did not inquire the price of the live rats, of which there were plenty; nor of the terrier dogs, for whose entertainment, as well as the entertainment of their brutal masters, they (the varmint) are believed, in the domain of St Giles, to have been created. The exposure of dogs was not equivalent to a pack of hounds; but if I might judge from barkings and

howlings heard ever and anon from sundry cellars, there was no scarcity of the animal within a hundred yards of the Seven Dials; and, indeed, the cellars thereabouts are low and deep enough for any secret purpose, bestial or human. The houses are of the age of London, 1660 to 1720 A.D.; and the descending stairs to these inferior parts are from ten to twelve steep steps. They have no areas, so that all their treasures and virtues must be confined within. One robin-redbreast in sad moulting touched my heart more nearly than all the rest of the pining prisoners; and I bethought me of the ancient ballad:

Now in there came my Lady Wren,
Wi' mony a sigh and groan:
'Oh, what care I for any bird,
If my dear Bob be gone?'

Then Robin turned him round about,
Even like a little king:
'Go, pack ye out of my chamber-door,
Ye little cutty quean!'

It would truly be a dismal scene here if Robin were to die, and

All the birds in this street
Fall a sighing and sobbing
When they heard the (muffin) bell toll
For poor Cock Robin!

But no such catastrophe taking place, I may return to my live-stock as dispersed about this strange nursery. There are buckets full of snails, not to make soup for consumptive buyers, but for larks; and there are baskets full of meal-worms, maggots, brandlings, and other baits for fishermen, of which anon. And there are multitudes of fish of many kinds, already caught—gold and silver, roach and dace, sticklebacks and minnows, the last to be had single in tiny glass globes at a penny apiece, and efts, and shells, and aquatic weeds, to fit up vivariums in the deftest manner. To be sure, the lady who sold these novelties in very old troughs at 5s. or 6s. each, called them wivahairlyhums; which nomenclature I recommend to the notice of the philological disputants in *articulo aquarii*. Birds' nests, silk-worms, false eyes, and fifty indescribable things, of appearances and uses unknown and unimaginable, filled up the measure of this *omnium gatherum*, confined to a single short street, within a stone's throw of busy commercial and fashionable resorts; but, I dare to state, seldom visited or seen by eminent mercantile men or leading persons of fashion.

Yet there are other attractions, some of which might even challenge the notice of 'the upper ten thousand.' There is, for example, a curiosity-shop, in the dusty window of which I observed a pair of 'Ormoloo Candlesticks,' at the small charge of 18s.; and there were old broken china, and cracked glasses and pictures of uncertified schools, which, if they had been in a Bernal sale, might have fetched I cannot tell how much. Here the entire collection might be had for an old song; and there was a ballad and cheap-press periodical office next door, as if to simplify the transaction. This shop consisted chiefly of publications of quite opposite tendencies to the intellectual, scientific, or religious classes. In truth, the literature of the site was not first-rate. The one book-stall, or tray, exhibited volumes tattered enough to afford proof of having at some time or other been thought worthy of the study of scholars; and the torn and greasy condition of the whole lot bore witness to the propriety of the librarian's sign-board title of 'Miscellaneous Dealer,' which was further guaranteed by a display of every species of old iron and brass, from rusty screw-nails, hammers, and pincers, to snuffers, pans, and dog-collars.

The luxuries of the population hereabouts are more than sufficiently furnished by cigar and tobacco shops, redolent of the stench of smouldering green vegetables, which is emitted from dirty and contorted mouths; and by public-houses and (at the corners) gin-palaces, the frequenters of which, male and female, are distinguishable by sottish looks and cadaverous complexions. The necessaries, if they may be so called, are supplied by little dens where everything looks faded and withered, as if stolen from bountiful mother-earth a month ago; semi-grocery, semi-conffectionery goods so fly-polluted and unclean, that it is astonishing to see even the youngest of the natives—and there are rucks of them in possession of every flag of the pavement—enticed to look upon the sugared filth with greedy eyes; *ter, terque beati* if they can snatch a bull's-eye or lollypop; and one rather roomy repository of cows' heads, sheep's heads, liver, strange scraps of cuttings from what part of an animal impossible to conjecture, and skewers of cats' meat. Of butcher, excepting this; of baker, excepting the confectioner pastry; and of fishmonger, excepting the minnow and eft dealers, the return is *nil*. Yet there are more places than one for the sale of fishing-rods and tackle, at which I looked with considerable surprise. It arose in my mind to inquire: 'Do Cockneys ever catch fish, and when, and where?' and if they do, this seems to be about the last resort where they would seek the means.

I have now but to touch upon the clothing-establishments, and conclude. The number, stock, and quality of old boot and shoe shops are quite extraordinary. It would seem as if there were no new shoes in the world, and that all the worn-out specimens were piled up here. To find feet for them to fit, is far beyond the perplexity of a Chinese puzzle, and yet they are ticketed with the valiant names of Blucher and Wellington, descending all the way to highlows and slippers.* The rival *costumiers* are the o' clo' and rag and bone shops—defended right and left by barbers' poles and notices of 'Shave for a half-penny'—from which scarecrows might be equipped in a style to frighten all the birds in the street. No wonder that the inhabitants are squalid and filthy, the men ragged, the women slattern, the children naked, unwashed, unkempt, rickety, and ignorant. It is a painful spectacle in the midst of a civilised and Christian community.

About the centre, an undertaker's, with coffin and the insignia of burial at his door and in his windows, suggests that there is an end to this sad state, and that the poor, uneducated, idly industrious, and intemperately dissolute, must also, in God's good time, pass to that abode where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest. And here I am brought to the domicile which first attracted my notice to this locality, and led me to sketch this picture of a very small spot of London-life. In the centre of dusky boards, which serve the office of glass in a wide window, a hideous, grinning, human ogre-like skull arrested my eye and steps. The dried head of a horse and the dried head of a ram kept it company; and the novelty caused me to wonder what these signs could portend. An inscription informed me that the owner of these deadly symbols was a 'Stuffer, and taught the art in three easy lessons' (Who would not go to school? It beats writing in six lessons, and a language in three weeks!); that 'Dogs were treated for all diseases;' that the 'Artist' was an 'Articulator of human bones, and Repairs done;' and finally, the previous remark was repeated in more general terms, 'Canine treated for

* I was told that the larger portion of these stores consisted of charitable gifts to barefoot beggars, who forthwith sold them to 'translators,' to be dumped up for the market of the community.

'all diseases.' At the next meeting of the British Association, and in section of Natural History, I said to myself, I will recommend this ingenious fellow to the patronage of Professor Owen; and meanwhile will make it known to the public at large, that whosoever needs to have his or her bones repaired or articulated, may apply for the job to Great St Andrew's Street, Seven Dials!—unacknowledged namesake of the patron saint of Scotland!

When so minute a bit of the capital supplies a *multum in parvo* far exceeding the features marked on my loose canvas, am I not warranted in fancying that a map and *catalogue raisonné* of the whole metropolis would exhaust the powers of pen and ink and paper!

THE NEW WAY OF PAYING OLD DEBTS WON'T DO.

SOME time ago, we called attention to an ingenious way of getting rid of old and troublesome debts, which consisted in the apparently legal device of visiting Scotland, and there, after a short and agreeable residence, passing through an obscure Bankruptcy Court. The discovery of the law which permitted an Englishman to wipe out his pecuniary obligations in this easy fashion, threatened to bring certain towns in the north into an unenviable degree of notoriety. The would-be bankrupts not being particularly fond of publicity, made a judicious choice of residence. They pitched on places having a resident sheriff and solicitors, but not possessed of a newspaper or reporters for the press. The most favourite localities were Tobermory in Mull, Portree in Skye, and Stornoway in the still more distant island of Lewis—places which in certain seasons timid persons would consider to be about as difficult to reach as if situated in Nova Scotia, and to which it was not very likely the ordinary class of creditors from England would think of following them. Some refugees did not even take the trouble of going so far as the Hebrides. In the pleasant little town of Peebles, an hour and a half by rail from Edinburgh, they found every requisite for carrying through their bankruptcy in as unostentatious a way as could be desired, while the place had the additional recommendation of offering good angling in the Tweed during the statutory period of forty days required to constitute an illusory residence.

When speaking of this monstrous legal abuse, we hinted that certain English creditors, possibly under some feeling of exasperation, had encountered the trouble and expense of objecting, on technical grounds, to a Tobermory bankruptcy; but at the time we wrote, the case in question was in dependence in the higher civil Scotch courts, and only now is it decided. According to this decision—one of the most sensible we have seen for a long time—English insolvents will no longer be able to go through a sham bankruptcy in Scotland; however sad their needs, the thing won't do. If they wish to become bankrupts, they must stay at home, and submit to the usual process. We need not recapitulate all the facts of the contested case; they may be seen in the newspapers of the day. The insolvent was William Gill, designated as barrister-at-law, having chambers in Lincoln's Inn, London. He had gone to Tobermory to pass through the Bankruptcy Court; Mr Joel, one of his English creditors, conceiving that the proceedings were irregular, presented a petition to the Court of Session, to have the bankruptcy recalled; and this, after some proceedings, has been effected. The bankruptcy is pronounced to be incompetent. The Lord Ordinary, in giving his decision, appends a long note of explanation; the substance of which is, that the applicant for bankruptcy must have his regular domicile in Scotland; jurisdiction being con-

stituted after a residence of forty days—'a jurisdiction arising in the natural course of events, and not the fruit of a device to support the application.' As we presume this will turn out to be good law, there may be said to be an end to the flight of English insolvents into Scotland. The promising harvest of law-business in Tobermory and elsewhere has once and for ever received a check; at least, we do not think that any fresh case is likely to occur. That Mr Joel—of whom we know nothing—deserves the thanks of the mercantile community for having interposed to arrest what was becoming a great public scandal, every one will allow; nor can we doubt that the successful issue of his operations will stimulate other creditors to recall those bankruptcies which have already passed unchallenged through the local Scottish courts.

One cannot pass from this by no means attractive subject without feeling that the continuance of distinctions in the legal usages of England and Scotland is alike inconvenient and detrimental. Why, at all events, is not every proper opportunity embraced of assimilating the mercantile law of the two countries, now that they are so thoroughly united socially? Why should there be one kind of bankrupt law in Carlisle, and another in the not far-distant Scottish town, Dumfries? Strange, that the impolicy of the present state of things does not force itself on the attention of the legislature. Without any prejudice in favour of the new Scottish bankrupt law, we believe it to be more simple and much more cheaply administered than that of England; and these recommendations have, perhaps, something to do in attracting undomiciled insolvents. That the English law is in some respects defective and unpopular, may be inferred from the fact, that a bill to remodel it is now before parliament; yet, from all we can learn, the projected changes will not assimilate the law to that which prevails in the northern part of the island. In the debates in parliament on the proposed new English bankrupt act, the law, as it exists in Scotland, was not so much as mentioned; nor is there any chance that uniformity in any single particular will be attempted. To the great inconvenience and perplexity of the mercantile community, there will still be two distinctly different laws, referring to one and the same kind of business, for England and Scotland.

'D. T.'

A STORY IN THREE CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER II.—AT HOME.

THE prospect offered by his Christmas hearth awoke no lively anticipations in Mark Harrup's breast. His pace slackened as he drew nearer home; it was now broad daylight, and people were moving about the streets with bright faces and cheery speech befitting the day. Turning the corner of a street leading out of the Blackfriar's Road, Mark suddenly encountered the owner of a certain face that was second to none in its hearty good-humour. Rounding the corner at the same moment, the two men had almost run into each other's arms ere they knew what they were about.

'Hollo! hollo! Why, bless my soul, if it ain't you, Harrup!' The speaker, a short, good-looking man, with a fustian jacket and big whiskers, carried a large sirloin of beef in one arm, and a small child in the other. 'Who'd ha' thought o' seein' you, mate! Dash it, I half thought it was your ghost. When did you leave the 'spital? Never knew you was out again till this minute.'

'Left it this morning,' was Mark's brief reply to his old friend and fellow-workman at the mills.

'Well, I'm right glad to see you out again,' said

John Thorne, in a voice that spoke volumes for his sincerity. 'It's been a bit of a warnin' to you, Mark—eh? Don't yer travel that road any more; it won't pay, anyhow.'

Mark looked anywhere but in his neighbour's face, and turned very red.

'It's been a bad time for your missus and the bairns, Harrup; but if you ain't been home yet, you wants to be off to 'em; so good-day to you, my lad, and good-luck to you,' and John Thorne strode along with his dinner and his baby as before.

Mark's heart turned hot within him: the sight of his old companion's happiness and respectability—John Thorne earned less wages, and was accounted a less-skilful workman than himself—stirred up feelings of envy and hate.

'Curse his impudence! If he had been his friend for twenty years, he'd no right to talk in that way: he wanted none of his advice, and he'd let him know it.' Chewing the above reflections, Mark's temper grew so hot and fiery, that he was constrained to enter a public-house to allay the feverish symptoms. Coming out again, the church-bells at the end of the street began to ring for service. Not caring to meet the church-goers, and feeling still a peculiar antipathy to all tintinnabulary sounds, Mark went back into the public-house, and refreshed himself once more; then, issuing forth again, made a *détour* by streets free from the above inconveniences, and so at length reached his home. Pushing open the street-door common to all the lodgers in the house, Mark mounted a dirty staircase, and ascended to the third floor. Arrived there, he stood a moment in hesitation with his hand on the lock; then turned it, and his home was before him. It was such a home as belongs to hundreds of men cursed with his habits—a garret-chamber, sordid and ugly; meagre furniture; a meagre fire, and two meagre children endeavouring to warm themselves therewith; a baby crying in its cradle; and a jaded wife preparing a meal at a rickety table.

'You didn't expect me just yet,' said Mark, as a cry of surprise broke from his wife's lips—'no, no, more did I, last night, expect to be here to-day. It's a new medicine's done it; only one trial, and cured directly.'

This brief explanation might not have satisfied every one, delivered, too, as it was with stammering lips and downcast looks; but he knew that his wife would not care to be informed by what agency her husband was thus suddenly restored to her—enough for her that he was there.

'O Mark!' she cried, bursting into hysterical tears, and flinging her arms round his neck, 'I'm so thankful—I'm so thankful! Sometimes I've thought I'd never see you come back home any more.'

'There—that'll do, that'll do,' said Mark, shaking off her embrace, and sitting down on a rush-bottomed chair.

'I couldn't ha' touched food this day, Mark, if you'd been lying yonder; the thought had took away all my appetite. I was making the children a plum-pudding; but I'll run and get a bit of steak, and soon get you a dinner ready.'

The term 'plum,' applied to the pudding, was a mere matter of courtesy to half-a-dozen raisins employed in its manufacture; it was the most palpable evidence of poverty the room afforded.

'Come and kiss your father, children,' continued Mrs Harrup, putting on her shawl; 'I'll be back directly, Mark.'

Little Jack and Fanny Harrup advanced as bidden; their greetings were soon over, and then they retired to mind the baby's cradle, casting furtive glances at 'father' from out their dark eyes. His presence awoke

no enthusiasm in their infantine minds. Beyond a desire to know where his beard had come from, Jack looked as though he felt no particular interest in his parent; while Fanny was evidently only curious to know whether he would eat all the steak or not.

Mrs Harrup was soon back again, bestirring herself to make matters comfortable. It was surprising how soon a light heart and good will enabled one pair of hands to work a change. The furniture certainly was not susceptible of much improvement. No ingenuity on Mrs Harrup's part could hide the frowsiness of the chair-bottoms, or the decrepitude of the table-legs; but a clean cloth was spread, all the crockery of the establishment produced, the hearth swept, the baby appeased, and the fire stirred up and replenished, till little Jack and Fanny might have thought, from the novelty of the sight, that their mother was about to cook an ox instead of a steak.

Mark beheld the preparations in silence. When they were at an end, and the dinner eaten—it had not improved the man's appetite to recall that it had been purchased by his wife's earnings, and not his—he rose from the table, and reached down his pipe and tobacco-box from the chimney-piece.

'No baccy,' he muttered, looking into the empty tin.

'If I'd known, Mark, you would have been here to-day, I'd have had it filled,' said his wife. 'I'll run, though, and beg some of Mrs Thorne; I know she'll lend us some.'

'Stay here! I ain't goin' a beginn' to John Thorne's wife. Here, Jack, run to old Snuffham's, and fetch me threepenny worth.' He threw a four-penny-piece on the table, and the little fellow hastened away.

Some time elapsed ere he was heard mounting the stairs again. There was a pause, then the child opened the door with a frightened, tearful face.

'Please, father, I—I—' Jack burst into tears.

'Ain't you got it?' demanded Mark.

Yes, he had got it, screwed up there in the gray paper in his hand.

'Where's the change?' asked the father—a suspicion of what had happened crossing his mind.

'I—I dropped it in the gutter, and it rolled—rolled—'

'Take that, you young dog,' cried Mark, dealing the child a cuff on the head. 'I'll teach you to lose money.'

'O father, don't, don't!' interposed the wife. 'He didn't mean to do it. It's Christmas-day; don't be angry with him.'

'What the devil do I care what day it is?' returned Mark. 'We've got no pennies to throw away. Come, hold that row, and give over blubbering.'

Thus admonished, Jack's sobs grew louder, and were only stifled by his mother thrusting her apron over his mouth, and smuggling him into the adjoining room, where he was heard moaning drearily for some time to come.

Mark filled his pipe, and began to smoke, his temper not improved by the above incident. He sat and stared morosely at the fire, and wondered how it was he felt no happier by his own hearth than he had done on a sick-bed.

Mrs Harrup, meanwhile, went on with her work, and then, when all was cleared away, and the kettle placed on the hob for tea, sent Fanny to join her brother, and came and sat down by her husband's side.

'Mark, what is it makes you so down-hearted? You don't seem glad to get home again.'

He puffed away at his pipe, but made no reply.

'It isn't the money you're troubling about, is it, Mark? You'll soon get into work again now. We've got through the worst o' things, and if—if—'

she hesitated a moment—"if you'll only put your shoulder to the wheel, we'll soon see ourselves righted."

Mark said not a word.

"It's been a hard time for us," continued his wife, "since you have been badly; but, thank God! we've got on somehow. I haven't had a penny from the club all the time you've been ill, for they said the subscriptions hadn't been paid up. I don't know what we'd have done without friends. I was obliged to borrow half a sovereign last week, to get bread and coals. It was lent cheerful enough, though I told 'em I couldn't pay it till you got into work again. Mark, you—you will try to leave off the drink, and be comfortable, won't you? I know"—here her voice quivered—"I know I'm often cross-tempered and soon put out now-a-days;" but oh, Mark, if you'd only try to be like what you were when we married, I think I'd grow more like myself again." She passed her hand across her eyes, and then went on again: "They say, Mark, you're cleverer at your work than most men. John Thorne says you're a vast sight handier than he is, and might ha' been foreman o' the works by this time, if you'd only been steady. Think, husband, what a heaven his home is to ours! And think of his children and of yours!"

Whilst Mrs Harrup was uttering these words, Mark's blood beat fast, and his choler rose. As she ceased, he sprang from his chair, and, with an oath, flung down his pipe amongst the ashes under the grate.

"John Thorne's at the bottom o' this! He's been setting you to preach to me, has he? You've been telling him and his wife some nice stories, I s'pose, since I've been yonder. What does he mean by giving me his advice! I'll teach him not to meddle with my business."

"I've told them nothing but what everybody in the street knows," said Mrs Harrup, with sudden warmth. "John Thorne's the last man, I think, you ought to abuse; it was him who lent me the half-sovereign!"

Mark Harrup gave a bound. "John Thorne lent you half a sovereign!" he cried, in a towering passion.

"Yes; and without it we might have starved, and, for aught you cared, would ha' done. When you went into hospital, there wasn't a penny to take o' your wages; it had all gone in drink. There was only two half-crowns in the house; and if I hadn't slaved like a horse, day and night, we'd ha' been in the streets afore now."

Mrs Harrup flung the words at her husband without pity. For a moment Mark's lips quivered impotently, and the curse that rose, hot and bitter, from his heart died away unuttered. Then he burst into a wicked laugh.

"Let John Thorne lend you another half-sovereign, then, if he's so flush o' money. I'rraps he'll keep the whole lot on you if you ask him, and rid me o' the bargain;" and, with a coarse insult that turned his wife's lips white, he took up his hat, and walked to the door.

"Stop!" cried Mrs Harrup, in a firm voice—"stop!"

He obeyed in spite of himself.

"Mark Harrup, I've been your wife these ten years. I've worked and toiled for you till I'm old before my time. I've nursed you through many a drunken bout; put up with ill temper and ill words, and, to this day, allus loved you, allus had hope of you; but the words you just spoke have done more to lessen my love, and take away my hope, than all that's passed between us before. If you don't wish to kill my hopes of you outright, you'll stay at home to-night."

A mocking look was Mark's reply.

"Husband!" gasped his wife, staring at him in dismay, "you don't mean—you're not going to the—"

"Yes; I'm goin' where I can find better company!" And then Mark saw his wife sink into a chair, with her face buried in her apron, and heard a great sob as he closed the door upon his Christmas hearth.

CHAPTER III.—IN THE NIGHT.

What length of time had passed since Mark Harrup last beheld his home, would have puzzled him to determine, as he stood, this gloomy afternoon, watching the lamplighter going his round down the street where he lived; nay, how he came to be standing there at all, would have perplexed him to decide. There he was, however, without a penny in his pocket, or a good or hopeful thought in his heart—his last farthing gone in drink, and even his tools—last shame of an honest workman!—pawned to obtain it. Only one place of refuge was open to him in the world—the home he had deserted.

Coming suddenly into the room where his family dwelt, he was greeted by a cry of fear. It proceeded from the lips of Jack and Fanny, on guard, in the twilight, over the baby's cradle. They were the sole occupants of the room.

"Where's your mother?" asked Mark, sitting down by the fireside.

"Out washing, father," answered Jack meekly.

"When will she be home?" he inquired.

"At six o'clock, for half an hour, to get us tea."

Mark said no more, but sat watching the few embers in the grate, till the cobbler's clock in the room beneath struck six.

"Here's mother!" cried the children simultaneously, as a well-known step was heard on the stairs; and ere the clock had done striking, 'mother' entered the room.

She started back as she beheld the figure seated by the hearth. For a moment, neither husband nor wife spoke. Mark was the first to break silence.

"Back again, you see. Like a bad half-penny, you can't get rid of me." He gave a grim laugh.

"I needn't ask you where you've been, Mark Harrup, or why you've come back again," said his wife in a tone he had never heard before. "There's that in your face as tells where you've been, and how employed. You don't expect a welcome this time, do you? My face won't lie."

"I don't expect nothing; you keep quiet, and I'll do the same." Though Mark spoke fiercely, he turned away his head; he couldn't bear to feel his wife's eyes on him.

"Ay, keep quiet, there's nothing else!" murmured the poor woman bitterly, and, forcing back her tears, she took off her bonnet and shawl, and entered the inner room.

When she appeared again, her tears were dried, and her face looked hard and cold. She went about her work without a word.

As he sat watching her in sulky silence, Mark felt some sharp twinges from time to time. The very forbearance of his wife irritated him. Had she flown into a passion, he could have retaliated, and found an excuse for the angry feelings that were consuming him. But to see her there, calmly getting the children's tea ready, without any other reproach than that her silence conveyed, was more than he could bear.

"Havn't you got nowt to say to me?" he said suddenly, without looking up.

"What should I have to say?" replied his wife in an unmoved voice; "nothing you'd care to hear."

"You're amazin' wise; but I'd like to know whether there ain't a scrap o' meat in the house, for one thing. I've eaten nothing this day."

'There's no meat, but there's bread. We're goin' to have tea, if you'll have some of that.'

Mark had some tea, but both bread and tea had a strange bitter flavour in his mouth.

The meal over, Mrs Harrup put the children to bed, and then prepared to sally forth again to her work.

'I shall be back by nine,' she said, putting on her shawl. 'If you want a light, there's another candle in the closet;' and Mrs Harrup closed the door, and went back to her wash-tub.

Left alone by his own hearth, Mark Harrup felt by no means a cheerful or contented man. His fireside deities had no pleasant words to offer him; his penates had grown voiceless and dumb; or rather, they had changed to furies, that glowered on him with angry faces in the twilight.

Sitting within the charmed circle that surrounds every man's hearth, a terrible despondency crept over him. The alcoholic fire in his veins had burned low, and left him faint, and craving stimulant. The fearful reaction—mental as well as physical—that follows drunkenness had set in—the deadly languor, the suicidal thought.

'I can't bear this,' muttered Mark, erelong; 'I must have something to drink, or I shall go mad.'

But the cupboard was empty; not a drop of beer or spirits could he find. He had no money in his pocket, and no credit at the public-house. He glanced round the room with dull, craving eyes, and at that moment would have sold anything he could lay his hands on to get drink. Suddenly, he gave a start, and sat down. The thought that had just entered his heart took away his breath.

For a moment, Mark Harrup felt his face burn as the dastard thought stood naked before him; the next, he lifted up his head and looked round, half fearful, half defiant.

What was it that moved him thus?

First he opened the door, and peeped out on the staircase; there was no one there. Then he stood and listened for full five minutes to the tap, tap, of the shoemaker's hammer in the room beneath. That done, he went to the window, and drew the ragged curtain across it—for neighbours' eyes are sometimes intrusive—and then, returning to the table, blew out the long-wick'd candle.

What a difference it made, the light of that one dip-candle! No sooner was it extinguished, than Mark felt another man. Emboldened by the darkness, he stole softly into the inner room, leaving the door ajar behind him.

Dick and Fanny were sleeping side by side, and the baby reposing in its cradle. Their low, measured breathing was the only sound in the chamber. Not a mouse stirred, not a cricket chirped, not a spider ticked. Guided by the fire-light from the outer room, the man drew near the bed, and looked at his children: they were sleeping tranquilly.

Why did he draw closer the curtains at the bed-foot? Why, moving away, did he give that guilty start as a board creaked under his foot? The deed he was about to do must have no eyes on it, least of all his own children's. Dead as Mark Harrup was to shame, he could not let them witness this last step in their father's downfall.

In another minute he was down on his knees, ransacking his wife's drawers for the few shillings she had earned. One drawer was locked; it was there, probably, her poor earnings were laid by. There was a dress hanging at the bed-foot; Mark felt in the pocket, and drew forth a key. His hand trembled so, he could scarcely place it in the lock. He opened the drawer, turned over the things and there, wrapped up in a stocking, lay six shillings, the wages of his wife's hard toil. He took them without

compunction, closed the drawer, and turned the key. As he did so, a shilling slipped from his fingers and rolled on to the floor. He stooped down to pick it up, and, raising his head again, beheld a pair of bright eyes fixed on him.

There, with his pale face peering between the curtains at the foot of the bed, was Jack awake and watching him.

'Father, you musn't take that. Mother earned it; and it's all we've got.' Though the child was trembling, he spoke bravely.

'What!' cried Mark, in a hoarse, suppressed voice; 'what's that you say?'

'Don't be angry wi' me, father. I saw you do it—I saw you take the money. It's all mother's got; don't take it from us, don't take it.' The little lad clasped his hands, and sprang on to the floor.

'Get out!' cried Mark, as the boy planted himself before him.

'No, father, don't go!—stop, stop! Mother'll break her heart if you take it.'

Jack said no more. Blinded by rage and fear, Mark struck a blow at his first-born that felled him to the ground.

His heart smote him when he saw the lad lie stretched on the floor, with a deathlike face, and a red stain trickling down his night-gown.

'Jack, look up—look up!' cried the trembling man; but the child stirred not.

Mark gave a terror-stricken glance round the chamber. A thousand fears rushed upon his mind. Bewildered, guilty, dreading he knew not what, he rushed from the room, and fled out of the house.

Once out in the lighted streets, he sped along without a pause; but his pace, though swift at first, grew slower by degrees, and at length he came to a stop. In proportion as he had widened the distance between him and his home, his fears had diminished.

'The lad was stunned, nothing more,' muttered Mark, standing at a street-corner to take breath. 'These low-spirited megrims must be put a stop to.'

'Of course they must!' cried a voice close to him; and looking round, Mark beheld, to his horror, his old acquaintance, 'D. T.', spring from one of the casks on a brewer's dray just turning the corner, and alight on the lamp-post by his side.

'Hollo! out of sorts, Mark?' said the goblin, looking down from his queer eyrie, and shaking his head. 'What's up? Pockets empty, eh?'

'No,' replied Mark, with surly embarrassment, and he began to rattle the money he carried.

'That's a good sound, Mark. Nothing wrong in that quarter. You don't look the thing, though. Let me advise you to get off home, and take a cosy supper with your wife. They'll be glad to see you; and you're only catching rheumatism here. It's amazingly cold to-night.'

Mark caught the wicked twinkle of the eyes that watched him, and swore a great oath.

'That's your manners, is it? Well, I only spoke for the best. Perhaps you'd prefer a glass of something hot in the parlour yonder. It's a good house, and they keep good liquor, I know' (the fiend pointed across the street to the public-house, resplendent in its night-array of blazing lamps). 'Anyhow, take your own choice, and don't lose your temper.'

And so saying, the imp glided down the lamp-post, doubled itself up, shot between Mark's legs, and was gone.

'Yes, and I'll do it too,' said Mark. 'I'll take my own choice; I've the means in my hand.'

He looked at his money in the lamp-light. Those six bright pieces could purchase him a stout heart and immunity from care for many hours to come.

He crossed the street, and entered the public-house parlour; the workmen sitting there stared at him.

His fierce looks and voice, as he called for brandy, were enough to draw attention on him. He took no part in the conversation going on; but sat in dreamy wrath, drinking off glass after glass, and adding fuel to the fierce passions within him; it needed but a word to blow them into flame. It came ere long.

Two men entered the outer room, and stood talking at the counter. Mark, seated near the door, could see all that passed in the bar. The mention of his own name first roused him.

'By the way,' said the taller and better dressed of the men, 'what's become of Harrup? I hear he's out of hospital; but he's never come back again to his work.'

The other, a short man with a good-tempered face, shook his head. 'It's a bad case, I'm afraid—a bad case.'

It was John Thorne and Barrett, the foreman of the works.

'Well, he's been going the wrong road a long time, or I'm mistaken,' continued the first speaker. 'I don't know much about him, for he was a surly sort of chap, and always shy of me, after I was put over him. He's a neighbour of yours, Thorne, ain't he?'

'Ay; and his wife's as industrious a little woman as breathes.'

'I expect his name's taken off the books at our place. He'll never be taken in again now. Has he any bairns?'

'Yes, God help 'em! I hear he's just got home from his last drunken bout; so the neighbours say. He's leading 'em a nice time of it to-night, I'll bet a penny.'

'That's a lie!' roared Mark, and he rushed into the bar, foaming like a madman—'that's a lie, Thorne! Take that for it.'

He dealt a murderous blow that would have sent John Thorne to the floor, had he not ducked his head.

'Stop, my man—stop!' cried Barrett, interposing a strong arm; but it was borne down like a reed as Mark made another furious rush.

'Turn him out! turn him out!' cried the workmen issuing from the parlour, and crowding round.

Mark was a powerful man, and dangerous to deal with at such time. All his fury was directed against his old companion, and he swore he would take John Thorne's life. Then followed a crash of glass and general tumult. Finding himself penned in, Mark gathered together all his strength, made a rush for it, and burst into the street, just as the police were arriving on the scene.

And now Mark took to his heels in earnest. It was no sham flight this time. A crowd was after him, threatening and denouncing. But he felt new strength in his limbs as he fled. Rather did it seem that he flew than ran, so fast did street follow street, and the scene change. His pursuers were left far behind, weary and panting. Their shouts grew fainter and fainter, and at last died away altogether. There stood Mark in a dark street, safe and unpursued, only dizzy with the rapid transit through the air.

He was far away from the spot where he started, far from his home or usual haunts. He could see by the light of a distant lamp the river flowing black and strong at the bottom of the street. He was in Lambeth; he knew the neighbourhood, for he had worked there as a boy. He set off again with rapid steps, little inclined to awake the past.

The night was dark, starless, and still. Mark thought he had never seen so few people abroad in his life. For the most part, the streets were empty; and when a neighbouring church-clock struck the quarters past eleven, Mark distinctly heard a mournful echo strike back from the dead-wall he was passing. Street after street presented the same deserted appearance. The sky was so inky black that the very light of the

gas seemed absorbed by it. There was something inexpressibly disquieting in the unnatural darkness and silence.

What was this strange influence abroad to-night, that all was thus solemn and still? What mystery was this brooding over the city, like the silent hour that precedes an earthquake?

A strange awe fell over Mark; he felt as though some terrible judgment were at hand.

Suddenly, on reaching the next street-corner, he stopped. Hark! what was that sound that made the air tremble? that noise of voices rolling out like a great sea into the night? Mark beheld before him a building streaked with long rows of windows, whence streamed broad floods of light. He recognised the place in a moment. It was a chapel where he had once been with his mother, years and years ago, to a midnight service on New-year's eve. He would have turned back, but his feet were rooted to the ground.

The singing had ceased; but now he could hear the voice of the preacher praying in a strong sonorous voice. He knew the voice again instantly. Impelled by a terrible curiosity, Mark opened the chapel-doors and peeped within.

Yes, as he thought: the same chapel, the same preacher, the same clerk, and—oh, ghastly spectacle!—the self-same congregation that sat there five-and-twenty years ago. There they were, not a day older, going through the service, just as though they had not—most of them—been dead and buried years ago. It turned Mark faint with terror when he beheld his childhood self seated by his mother's side, in the very spot where they had sat twenty-five years ago. He closed the baize-doors softly, and, staggering into the porch, sat down on the chapel steps, with his head buried in his hands.

Was it real? or was he about to die, and this the warning he was to receive?

A thousand thoughts hurried through his brain; a crowd of lights danced before his sight, and his burning eyeballs seemed to spit fire as he pressed his hand before them. What was that strange picture travelling before him in the dark? A phantom panorama seemed unrolling itself there!

It was his own life passing before him. His childhood, his mother's grave, his apprentice-days, his young wife—all were there, terrible and significant as is the past of every life. He groaned aloud. The promise of his boyhood, the hopes of his youth, the strength and skill of his manhood, were to end then thus. There stood the irrevocable deeds to witness to his shame. Had he not outraged his wife, his children, and his friend? Had he not that very night thirsted for John Thorne's blood? robbed his own wife, and struck (perhaps slain) his child? Oh, coward heart! there is no hope now. Slink out of the world thou hast rendered blacker by thy presence, for it disowns thee!

He rose, blind and sick, to seek an exit. Just then, there rose an impassioned burst of voices from the chapel within. They were singing out the old year Hark!

Now let us join with voices blended,
To chant the year that nears its goal;
Say, sinner, ere the year be ended,
Say, wilt thou save thy deathless soul?

God's ear is open; hope still lingers;
Time's sands flow fast—they're nearly run;
See, yonder clock lifts warning fingers:
Awake! be saved, ere the year be done!

'Ere the year be done!' repeated Mark, a cold sweat breaking out on his forehead. 'Is this, then, the last night o' the year? God Almighty! where am I? What am I about? It's too late—too late. I'm a doomed man.'

The bells broke into a loud peal in a church near at hand, as he spoke; Mark stopped his ears, and fled.

There was nothing left but the river; it flowed yonder at the bottom of the timber-yard in the next street. Mark knew the spot well enough; he had worked there as a lad. The next minute he was groping his way through piles of wood, and the wreck and litter that strewed the margin of the river. There lay the great stream before him, torpid and black, like a boa gorged with the foul offal of the city. On either shore stretched the dusky outlines of wharves and buildings, keeping guard over its foul slumbers. No boat nor barge now woke its rest, but it lay there grim and deadly as Python in its lair, breathing out poison over the slumbering city. Through the murky night, the houses on the Millbank side were scarcely visible, save where a lamp glimmered near the water's edge. Mark gazed on the dark river, and, shuddering, hoped his body would not be discovered there. 'Perhaps the current might bear him away to a better resting-place in the far-off sea. Any way, whether there or here, there would be an end to him and his shame.'

Brooding over these thoughts, he drew nearer the water, when, to his terror, he heard his own name distinctly pronounced out of the darkness hanging over the river. There was something floating up in the distance, dim and shapeless; now the light of the lamp on shore shone on it. Mark's knees knocked together with fear. There, astride on a dead dog, swollen and hideous, sat his old enemy, the branded imp! The creature greeted him with a long shrill laugh; it was prolonged by a series of echoes that stretched far down the river; and, peering through the darkness, Mark beheld a demon troop, headed by three ghastly figures, seated on a crazy raft, sailing up.

'Here they come, Mark; I promised I'd introduce you to my family one day. Look alive, lads; here he is!'

Mark had never, in his worst dreams, seen anything so loathsome, so terrible as the three creatures seated on that raft. Had all the lazars, prisons, and asylums in Europe been searched through, they could not have produced three specimens of humanity so hideous and libellous as were these.

'Here they are, my three worthy brothers, Paralysis, Apoplexy, and Madness—eccentric, perhaps, but moving in the best circles, and cultivated by all classes of society! As you have already made the acquaintance of the youngest member of the family, your humble servant, *Delirium Tremens*—here the goblin bowed, and smiled horribly—'I hand you over to any one of these gentlemen who may wish to succeed me. Ah, ah, ah! Sold, sold!'

The demon burst into a laugh that startled all the echoes round, and opening his black bottle, poured out a libation to the river. The effect was instantaneous. The water began to boil and seethe in an extraordinary manner; bubbles rose up on the surface all around, and, bursting, disclosed phantom shapes and figures on all sides—some foul and unnatural; others human-eyed, and full of fearful meanings; pale, gin-blighted infants; bruised and tangle-haired women; brutal, scowling-faced men: monstrous shapes born of sin, that swam and dived, and came into sight, and floated away again into the night.

'Behold our subjects—behold the offspring of our great parent. Yonder they are, and here's the sceptre with which we rule them.' With mock dignity, the fiend brandished his bottle aloft, and pointed to the river.

'At last I know thee, cursed fiend!' cried Mark. 'Tis thou who thus transformest God's creatures. Tis

thou who hast dragged me down to death. Perish, foul spectre!' and, as he spoke, he seized a spar, and, springing forward, aimed a blow at the face that mocked him. But it only cleaved the air—the fiend was gone—and, losing his balance, the wretched man fell back into the shallow water at the river's edge, to die drowned in a foot of water.

He felt the foul stream bubbling over his lips, and could not rise. He tried to cry for help, but his voice died in his throat. A noise like that of bells from a hundred steeples sounded in his ears, and the air grew thick with the troops of spectres rising from the river. The lingering death before him roused him to new strength, and, finding voice at last, Mark Harrup gave a great cry, stretched out his arms, and grasped—a warm, living hand!

'Hollo! that's a precious sort o' noise to make. Wake up—wake up! you're dreaming, man!'

It was his neighbour, the cabman, in the next bed, who thus adjured him. Mark opened his eyes, and, behold! there he lay in the ward of St Shambles, with the morning sun shining in at the windows, the world—the real flesh-and-blood world—around him, and Life still his to better and improve.

It was all a dream, then! Yes, a dream; but, judged by its results, more real, more potent than many of the so-called realities of life; and so Mark Harrup lived to acknowledge it. His first act—after asking permission to shake hands with Number Twenty—was to breathe up a few words more like a prayer than any that escaped his lips for many a year; and that prayer was heard.

A SEBASTOPOL GUIDE-BOOK.

One of the caricatures that appeared at St Petersburg, during the Crimean war, represents a gentleman accompanied by an elephantine bull-dog. 'Why do you call your dog Sebastopol?' asks a friend. 'Try to take him, and you'll soon find out,' is the reply. Our own riddle, likening Gibraltar to ineligible lodgings, may fairly turn up its nose at the discomfited Slavonian. The bull-dog has been taken; but he bit hard before he yielded, and his master had no reason to complain of his conduct.

The Russians are justly proud of the defence of Sebastopol. Within the walls, as well as without, a heroic struggle was maintained throughout that terrible war-storm; and we, who gloriously gained the prize, can well afford to admire the courage of those who not ingloriously lost it.

Sebastopol will long be a household word among the children of the czar; familiar to the fur-clad tribes who dwell along the shores of the Arctic Sea, to the exile and the hunter in the wastes of Siberia, and to the mariners whose vessels traverse the waters of the Euxine. The fierce riders of the Ukraine will talk of it at the bivouac; it will form the subject of stories in the coffee-shops of Astrakhan; the tale of its defence will speed the weary hours spent at outposts in the Caucasus; and at a thousand Russian firesides, one of that leaguered garrison will be found, for years to come, to narrate his adventures and sufferings there in the cause of 'God, the fatherland, and the czar.'

Many a pilgrim, too, will visit the spot consecrated to him by the blood of his countrymen; and for such travellers the guide-book is intended from which we are about to quote. It is written in Russian, by one D. Afanasev, an author of whom we know nothing

except that he is intensely patriotic, and very fond of fine phrases.

The book was compiled soon after the termination of the war, and the traveller is warned not to expect much comfort in the city. If he is resolved to stay there, he is recommended to patronise Vettzel's Sebastopol Hotel, in the Morakaya Street. 'The charges are—about six francs a day for a room with a bed, &c.; for tea in the morning or evening, eighteenpence; for meat, about a franc the portion; for a cup of coffee, fourpence.'

The traveller having arrived at the city, his guide takes him round the fortifications, and points out the most interesting spots. One of these is the Ekaterinsky Quay. 'This quay, before the siege began, was the favourite resort of the inhabitants of Sebastopol during their evening promenade. On one of its squares was the orchestra of the military band. Pleasant sounds used to be wafted far across the harbour, which was filled with vessels of war. The whole of the quay and the steps were covered with crowds of fashionably dressed ladies and of sailors; on every side were heard the hum of conversation and the sounds of merry laughter; gay boats darted to and fro. Add to this picture the starlight of the bewitching southern night, the blaze of a thousand varicoloured lights, with their reflection on the water, whose surface, broken by the splashing oars, burned with a phosphoric glow.'

'During the defence of the city, this quay was used as the chief dépôt for the supplies of the fortifications. On the 26th of August, at 10 o'clock P.M.,* two sloops, containing a great quantity of powder, were blown up by the enemy's rockets. In the dark night there was a blinding flash, a fearful shock. The picture was magnificent. The whole quay was defaced; a number of heavy guns collected there were shattered to pieces, and thirty-two men were killed.'

The author proceeds to relate how a certain officer, 'a man of great height, and tolerably stout,' was flung some distance, and how 'the skirts of his military cloak were torn away and vanished in boundless space!—a most thrilling conclusion.'

The visitor proceeds. He is taken to the market-place. 'Here in past time were held the markets and the amusements of the people on holidays. The spot was always swarming with lively crowds, and every inhabitant of the city, to whatsoever class of society he belonged, found there diversion and pleasure. On the first days of the siege, the 12th and 13th of September, the place became the camp of the defenders of the city. Drums were beating, and groups of brave sailors, tried in the affair of Sinope, were stretched on the ground in all directions. Brave men! From the time of his first step on deck, the service introduces the seaman to danger, and makes him familiar with it, for he passes his life amid the roaring of the gale and the thunder of the foaming sea. Gaze on that face, listen to that voice—their course is that of honour, glory is their due. Peace to your dust, ye examples of heroism in the Russian nation! They all are there—they all fell a noble offering to honour, for the glory of the Russian name, performing a noble deed in behalf of their native land.'

Here is an account of a Sailors' Battery. 'On the 5th of October, at the moment when the fire was hottest, a grayhaired monk, bareheaded, holding in his hand a cross, proceeded round the advanced lines of batteries with tranquil steps, and blessed the troops in artless speech. "Children," he said, "remember God; he who believes shall not die, and it is a holy thing to serve the czar." Finally, he passed through an embrasure to the parapet, and falling on his knees amidst a storm of missiles, prayed for the victims of that day, and for a cessation of the horrors of war.'

'Only an eye-witness could thoroughly appreciate this simple but wonderfully sweet and consoling manifestation of true faith, so much above what we can attain to; in a moment of strong emotion, such scenes make a deep impression on a man's moral nature. The sailors crossed themselves devoutly, and, loading the cannon, replied: "Father, we will remember God, and will unite in serving the czar as we ought;" and well did they keep their word. The day of the 5th of October will be a memorable one in the annals of the glorious defence; the troops did not retire from their guns till late in the evening; and notwithstanding the tremendous fatigue, they were very unwilling to surrender their places to those who were sent to relieve them.'

The author appears to be a sailor himself, for he dwells long on the naval glories of other days.

'Look on the deserted, lifeless harbour, where only the fragments of masts, peering above the wave, recall to mind that which has vanished—the Black Sea fleet, which once so proudly vaunted itself in this roadstead. The pennants of one hundred and fifty vessels of war used to salute Sebastopol, and the constant movement in the harbour, the interminable going and coming of boats, gave a special life to the city, and a charming picture to its inhabitants. Let us look back upon the past. Here is the experimental squadron returning from practice; the ships fly towards the entrance, crowding all sail: troops of spectators, armed with opera-glasses and telescopes, fill the Little Boulevard, and follow each movement of the squadron, which executes dashing manœuvres at the signal of the flag-ship. The crowd grows animated, and expresses its raptures or disapproval aloud; even the ladies join in the disputes of the sailors, and cast criticising glances on the movements of the ships. When the fleet enters the harbour, it is aware of this. The sailors seeing the people, know that their movements are followed by rigid critics, and accordingly exert their utmost skill, each crew hoping to hear flattering praises of its ship on arriving at the quay. Now the squadron is in the harbour; the anchors fall; the chain-cables rattle out; another moment, and the sails are furled, the yards squared, the tackle covered up, and the ships gracefully admire themselves in the liquid mirror of the calm roadstead. Another moment, and gay boats are darting over the harbour to the quay, where the crowds from the boulevards await their coming; new scenes of general satisfaction manifest themselves, and the happiness of reunited families banishes all coldness even from the face of a foreign observer, who does not participate in the joyful greetings. You have seen one picture; let me shew you another also. It is the 21st of November 1854, and the news of the return of the victorious squadron from Sinope has run along the

* It is to be observed that our author everywhere uses old style in the statement of dates.

electric wire around the city, and aroused all its inhabitants. It is a warm, clear morning, and old and young, men and women, swarm in dense crowds along the boulevards and the sea-shore. In the harbour is every vessel of the Black Sea fleet which has not shared in the famous fight; in the estuary is a squadron of injured ships, with crippled masts and broken bulwarks all towed by steamers.

‘A welcoming salute peals from the No. 8 Battery, and after it thunder the greetings of every ship in the bay. The salute is answered by the guns of the men-of-war as they enter the harbour—guns which so short a time back were gloriously destroying the hostile fleet. The ceaseless cheers of some thousands of enraptured spectators are borne across the harbour from the city side, and find an echo on the opposite shore.

‘At that moment, Sebastopol was full of confidence, proud of the fleet, and joyous as a youth proceeding to the battle-field. Time passed, and the city took up her position for the defence of her native land, and events whirled quickly before her. On the 10th of September 1854 the harbour was filled with vessels of war; the enemy’s fleet was in view, but far out at sea. The incessant bustle and the swift movements of the boats in all directions testified to the activity of the sailors; and their efforts were effectual. After the unsuccessful battle of the Alma, the troops that had defended Sebastopol were withdrawn by flank-movements to Baktchésarai, and the town and fleet were left for the time to the heroism of the sailors, with very insufficient means of resistance. Our admirals did not take long to consider. “Let us die, but with honour!” was the cry. The vessels were towed to the mouth of the harbour, and sunk between Fort Constantine and Fort Alexander. Sad were the sailor’s feelings, melancholy was the scene to him—to watch the gradual sinking of the ship he had helped to work, on which he had lavished his cares, as on the woman he loved.’

Here is a description of the naval bombardment of the city:

‘On the 5th of October, at 1 o’clock P.M., the hostile fleet, consisting of fifteen vessels of the line, besides frigates, took up their position in the bay at 500 fathoms from the entrance, and began to batter the city and the forts. Clouds of dense smoke concealed the ships from the besieged; but the flashing of long lines of fire, the thundering roar of broadsides, and the surface of the harbour lashed into foam by the shot, bore witness for a space of six hours to the close vicinity of the foe. The roar of 3000 guns united in one terrible peal, and was heard at Simferopol.

‘An eventful day, which has crowned the defenders of Sebastopol with a wreath of glory. The hostile batteries ceased their fire, the injured fleet withdrew, and the joy of all in the city banished the doubts that had arisen.’

The English are not often mentioned in the book. The author declares that he could always recognise the spots where they had encamped by the enormous number of empty bottles they left behind them; and he speaks in one place of their excessive regret at not being able to throw their shot as far as the open space where the soldiers of the garrison were diverting themselves with games, and solacing their minds with music. Here is also a curious incident:

‘Balaklava, in this war, will have immortalised itself in the eyes of posterity. At the time when 15,000 of the English troops were marching in triumphal array on the defenceless little town, suddenly a shot came whizzing from the hill, and then another, and finally a volley of cannon. The English were confounded, beat a retreat, brought up their artillery, and began to batter the unhappy town. After

a long bombardment, they at last perceived that their fire was totally unanswered. It appeared that eighty men, veterans of the Greek battalion of Balaklava, had amused themselves on the hill by firing some of the small stores of ammunition they possessed out of two ten-pounder brass guns. While surrendering themselves prisoners, they saved their ancient colours, giving them to one of their women, who kept them hidden in a cushion.’

We will revenge ourselves on the author for this very probable story by making him relate the evacuation of Sebastopol:

‘On the dark night of the 27th of August, the whole of the Ekaterinsky Quay was crowded with the retreating troops. More than 3000 wounded men, who had scarcely been able to drag themselves to the spot, or who had been carried by their comrades from the bastions, harrowed the feelings of all who were present by the deep groans that told of the pain they endured. Along the quay lay steamers, barges, and boats. In sullen silence, without a word, the troops embarked, taking the wounded with them, and crossed to the other side. Only the clash of arms, the groans of the wounded, the challenge of the sentries, and the roll-call of regiments and companies, testified to the life of this deathlike picture, over which was cast a lurid light by the distant sky, which reflected the burning of the opposite part of the city. By eight o’clock in the morning ended the transport of the last troops which covered the retreat. On the north side all was movement. A cool observer on this day, so sad to Sebastopolitans, might have enjoyed the beautiful picture of the immense camp on the further side of the roadstead, and the uninterrupted march of the troops. The enemy, either expecting that an unsuccessful attack would be accompanied by an enormous loss, or respecting the sublime courage of their heroic foe, did not venture to disturb them during their abandonment of the city. . . . The defenders of Sebastopol, whose courage had been tempered in the deadly fire, who had for a whole year encountered their enemies face to face, and who had guarded with their breasts each step of their native land, were worthy of brighter day.’

The following anecdote must vex any Zouave who interested himself in the church of St Michael: ‘On the abandonment of the city, the priest of this church buried in the ground within the building, in one corner, an enormous quantity of church-plate, and some of his own valuables in another. Strange to relate, though the French soldiers, in their search for treasure, dug up all the ground in the vaults, and discovered the property of the priest, yet the church-plate was found by us intact on our return.’

We may take leave of our guide after hearing two anecdotes—one of a great man whose name we know a little, and the other of a by no means great man, whose name we know intimately. ‘Facing St Michael’s Church, are the remains of a blue house. Here were the quarters of General Todtlenben. Here were to be seen the plans, whence, without ceasing, new bastions sprang up to fire on the obstinate foe. Here, when the hero’s foot had been pierced by a ball, and the first bandage was being applied, a shell burst close to the window—the surgeon in his fright gave an involuntary start, and tore the wound open. The general, however, maintained his usual equanimity, and even cut a joke upon the doctor’s awkwardness.’

Next for the familiar name. The story will edify the French ambassador. ‘But see the Malakoff mound. The history of its name is very simple: a sort of pothouse used to stand there, and, at the same time, there served in the admiralty a certain man called the Skipper Malakoff, an active fellow, but given to drink. He was the proprietor of the pothouse, and all who wanted to see him sought him

there. He lived there many years, and at last the place and the man became known by the same name, which has accordingly been handed down to posterity as the designation of the mound.'

THE UNKNOWN BASS.

A STORY FROM BEGINNING TO END.

In a by-street in Marylebone, and not very far from the theatre, a certain small house had been let for many months. 'To Let Furnished,' said the card in the window; but there was certainly not much within doors to bear out that complimentary participle. A good deal of horse-hair, and a short allowance of looking-glass, made up the main features of the sitting-rooms; while some very hard mattresses, scudding under bare poles, with thin slices of drugged, by way of carpets, characterised the sleeping-apartments.

It was not the sort of house for any man—but a Petruchio—to bring his wife to spend the honeymoon in; and yet scarce anything but a honeymoon would have made the residence tolerable. When the card, therefore, which within its parlour-window had braved for so long a time the cobwebs and the flies, was withdrawn, when the stubborn flag was struck which proclaimed that the little house was taken, the astonishment of such of the neighbours as knew the place was very considerable. The inhabitants of such parts of the metropolis as the vicinity of the Marylebone Theatre are by no means so uninquisitive as Londoners have the reputation of being; they rather take a pride in cutting off their peculiar district from the rest of the world, and making it a sort of provincial town of their own, with as fine a circulation of scandal and cock-and-bull stories as can be promoted. It is not to be supposed, then, that the new tenant of No. 99 had escaped inquisition, even if his appearance and mode of life had been much less mysterious than they were. These were indeed calculated to upset the stoicism of a North American Indian. In the first place, this gentleman who cared so little for good furniture, only exposed the moiety of his face to the Marylebone eye; the other half being covered with a voluminous and patriarchal snow-white beard. While in the second place, meagre as this exhibition was, it was scarcely ever afforded; for the tenant of No. 99 'kept himself to himself'—to use the neighbours' phrase—to a most aggravating extent, and such as led, naturally enough, to the supposition he must have committed at least a felony.

'No one,' it was argued, 'as hadn't done something which he had a good right to be ashamed of, would remain in doors all day, and only come out o' nights, with the owls and bats, for virtuous.' 'Nobody as had a proper respect for himself, would keep all his blinds down, sitting-room and bedroom, Sundays and worky-days, as though there were a corpse in the house—as perhaps, indeed, there was.' 'Nobody would take such pains to put his candle between himself and other folk's eyes, when he sat in his parlour after dark, unless for some good reason—just as if people as lived opposite hadn't something else to do beside spying into their neighbours'—which, however, if they had, it is certain they neglected it for that inquisitorial proceeding, and in vain.

It took a bold woman—and women are far bolder than men in such matters—to resort to more direct measures with this formidable Unknown; but when the local excitement got beyond bounds, it found a voluntary channel in Mrs Damahoy, who purveyed groceries to the subject of all this conjecture, as well as pork, dried herrings, and indeed almost every luxury of life except shaving-soap, which he didn't use. As she was enclosing in brown paper, with a

greater elaborateness than usual, the articles required by her formidable customer, one Saturday night, she ventured, without, however, daring to look up at him, to ask whether he didn't feel it rather lonesome shut up in that No. 99 all alone. Receiving no reply to this kind inquiry, and imagining, therefore, at least that she had not angered him, she made bold to repeat it, and to give him a benignant glance at the same time. So far from this being reciprocated, never did a gentleman's face on a white beard look so like the Saracen's Head upon Snow Hill before; the unknown's hair began to bristle, and his eyes to glow, while his mouth, looking with its long appendage for all the world like a Highlander's sporran, closed with a ferocious snap, as he said: 'No, ma'am.' Such was the terror with which Mrs Damahoy inspired her hearers on the telling of this adventure, that there was none in Marylebone who durst interrogate the bearded man again. Opinions, original and selected, concerning himself and his occupations were, however, not the less rife; among the more ingenious of which we may mention—1st, That he was a cunning worker in silver and brass, or, less delicately, a successful forger of the basest currency; 2d, That he was the individual so long pictorially familiar to the British public as the living example of the benefits conferred by the Balm of Mesopotamia upon the human hair; and 3d, That he was a refugee, imbued with the most practical political principles, engaged upon constructing a new Infernal Machine. In the midst of all this mysterious conjecture, it became suddenly and simultaneously known, as though by telegraphic dispatch in the *Times* newspaper, that the tenant of No. 99 had joined a convivial club, had become one of the members of the West Marylebone Sons of Song. The revulsion of popular feeling in consequence of this information was indescribable. If Mr Greenacre—at that particular time in close custody for his injudicious behaviour to his consort—had been invited to Buckingham Palace, and given his pick among the maids of honour for his second; if Caspar Hauser—not known to be deceased by the Marylebonians—had been enticed from Germany by the offer of the editorship of the *Court Journal*; if Mr Thomas Cribb of the P. R. had got the refusal of the vacant Archbishopric of Canterbury—the news of none of these things could have affected Mrs Damahoy and her large circle of acquaintance with greater surprise.

Every woman who had a husband belonging to the W. M. S. S. no longer looked upon his 'clubbism' as a dissipation or an excess, but much as a very conscientious person regards a raffle, in which he has been so fortunate as to secure a prize. Each man was enjoined to bring home the most exact particulars of how the unknown conducted himself in voice and gesture; while the more anxious helpmates suggested that his every pocket should be searched before admission, lest the wretch might take a fancy to make experiment on that 'vile body,' the Sons of Song, of the Infernal Machine intended for the Fathers of Tyranny.

It was as one of the members of the W. M. S. S. that I myself first became acquainted with our hero. He was certainly a very striking-looking person indeed; and if he had but been blind, might have sat for Belisarius. It was not unusual for some really excellent singers to mix with our company—people with vocal organs, the public reputation of which would have been tarnished were they known to have been exercised at our humble club, and therefore we had a rule that nobody need give his name upon joining us. All that we required of a man was, that he should be able to sing a song, or, at all events, take part in glee, and that our new member could do to great perfection. He was the basest of the bass, and could sink to lower depths in the scale of harmony than any of us.

His voice, like that of the ghost of Hamlet's father, seemed to be kept underground, where it acquired certain rich rumbling notes unapproachable by the general lungs. His jealousy on this matter was extreme, and he was peculiarly sardonic upon Simmons (of the Cider Cellars), his sometime rival, whom he likened to the smaller animal in the fable of the frog and the ox. These two, like a couple of hostile corps of sappers and miners, went on endeavouring to get each underneath the other, until something snapped at the bottom of Simmons's throat, which put him, as was unfeeling but facetiously observed, quite 'hoarse de combat.'

Our bearded friend always reminded me of the Italian singer in the story, who died of vexation because a stranger, who wanted his post, had inquired if he were the Pope's Bass in deeper tones than he himself could compass. He certainly would not have remained in the W. M. S. S. except as *facile princeps*, cock of the walk. Beside his gifts of harmony, however, the stranger was soon found to be a man of great social endowments. As soon as the business of the evening was concluded, his voice came up to ordinary conversation-pitch, and kept the supper-table in a roar with his brilliant witticisms. The singularity of his conduct, as one who had voluntarily become a member of a convivial club, was this, that the instant after he had wished us 'good-night,' and crossed the threshold, he ceased to utter a word. He shook off any one who attempted to accompany him home, and stalked gloomily away to his No. 99, not again to reappear in social life until the next meeting of the W. M. S. S., on that day fortnight. The invitations of his fellow-members to visit their houses he rejected almost rudely; and, therefore, it is needless to say the wives never got to think any better of the mysterious and bearded unknown than at first. Nevertheless, the neighbourhood began to get used to him, as neighbourhoods will in time get used to anybody, and Mrs Damahoy soon found herself dispensing to her once awful customer the same short weight in his bacon, the same alien substances in his sugar, as she gave to the oldest and most trusting inhabitant of the district. I dare say that when New Year's eve came round, the postman would have called for his Christmas-box just as naturally at No. 99 as at any other door, although he had never left a letter there; and that the Blanket Committee would have applied for a donation, albeit there was known to be such a very scanty allowance for night-covering in the bedrooms of No. 99 itself. These extremities of human hardihood were not, however, by the bearded man to be experienced, on account of a certain astounding circumstance to which all that has been above described is but the introduction.

It was on a certain evening in the beginning of April that the club looked upon its best bass-singer for the last time. Simmons was thence all the more malicious against his rival because of his cracked voice, and there was a large general attendance. After supper, conversation taking, naturally enough, a musical direction, we began to discuss the merits of the then new arrival at Covent Garden, the great Russian bass-singer, Downinistoeski. He had not sung yet, but was to give the first specimen of his magnificent art of sinking that very night.

'Nobody will ever care to listen to an English singer again,' squeaked the ex-bass Simmons.

'Pooh!' bellowed our bearded friend contemptuously, but in tones so like that of a trombone in bad spirits that we could not help laughing. Simmons in particular laughed like a penny-trumpet. Belisarius, as we called him playfully, never retorted one word, but arose presently and put on his great-coat. It was not yet ten o'clock, and yet he was evidently going, and going in a very bad temper. Several of us

begged him to sit down again, and be appeased, but his *amour propre*—his favourite organ—had been offended: his hirsute chin assumed the aspect of the fretful porcupine, and he answered 'No,' in the accents of distant thunder.

'He has gone to hear the Russian singer,' squeaked the unforgiving Simmons; and after a few minutes, his absence was no more remarked. Whether he did go to hear the Russian singer or not, no mortal tongue can tell. Certain it is that in the next morning's paper, immediately after a glowing eulogium upon the unrivalled powers of the new artiste at Covent Garden, there appeared this paragraph: 'We stop the press to publish the awful fate which has befallen the subject of the foregoing eulogium. Herr Downinistoeski was assassinated last night upon his way home from the opera. No cause for the fiendish act has been even suggested, and the dark deed and its author remain at present shrouded in the obscurest mystery.' As soon as I had read this statement, I instinctively put on my hat, and turned my steps to No. 99. A considerable crowd, consisting of half the club, was in front of the house already, to all of whom the same terrible idea had simultaneously occurred. The first expression was given to it by a certain cracked voice inquiring for a policeman, and demanding that the door should be broken open. This last was immediately effected, and the whole of the exceedingly ill-furnished little house searched from top to bottom in a few minutes; but the bearded tenant of No. 99 had disappeared for ever.

Years rolled on without revealing anything of the mysterious murderer, or of the man whom the Sons of Song, with one accord, choose to identify with him; I say 'choose,' because the matter still remains entirely optional. Were I a writer of mere fiction, it would, of course, be easy enough, by some plausible explanation, to satisfy the reader's curiosity; but simple Truth, with severe finger at her lip, bids me be silent. Never save once have we even appeared to be getting to the bottom of this awful mystery, although we have been heaving the lead of Supposition in the fathomless waters of Possibility from then till now. That *once* occurred this time ten years—that is to say, on April 1, 1849, the anniversary of the supposed murderer's disappearance. Upon that evening the club was always somewhat sombre (for it never quite shook off the memory of the bearded stranger), and on this occasion it was particularly so by reason of the cholera, then raging in that part of Marylebone with exceeding fury. We had finished our glees, which had been of a weirdlike and uncheerful character, and were sitting, thirteen in number, each with his pipe of tobacco, in a moody silence, which had scarce been broken during the quarter of an hour that the pot-boy had been gone for beer. It was an unconscionable time for him to be absent upon such an errand; but we had hardly observed it, for the thoughts of most of us were, I think, more seriously engaged. All of a sudden, in rushed the boy with the foaming pewters, which he set down, without a word, on the nearest table, and pressed his hand against his side. His hair was in wild disorder, his cheeks were blanched as though by abject fear.

'You have seen him,' squeaked the ex-bass Simmons, with the quaver of unaffected terror—'you have seen him! Tell us, tell us!'

The whole thirteen rose up, and removing their long 'churchwardens' from their mouths, as by a common impulse, echoed the question after the manner of an operatic chorus, 'You have seen him! Tell us, tell us!'

'Seen him?' returned the pot-boy vacantly—'seen who? I ain't seen no person; but I bin heating a

'eap of hopples at tuppence the pound, and now I'm very sorry for it.'

N.B.—'The right of believing the above story is reserved for the reader.'

THE MONTH: SCIENCE AND ARTS.

MR FARADAY's lecture on Ozone, at the Royal Institution, has revived a discussion among chemists as to the real nature of that remarkable element. Some are of opinion that ozone is not a distinct thing, but simply a condition of oxygen at the moment of chemical change, as pointed out some years ago by Professor Brodie.—Dr Tyndall has contributed further facts and experiments in elucidation of the physical phenomena of glaciers, derived from his adventurous explorations in the Alps, in the course of last summer; throwing a beam of light upon a screen, passing on its way through a slab of ice fixed in a press, he shews that by the application of pressure the striae and veins are produced, on a small scale, which nature produces on a great scale in the glaciers of Mont Blanc. The Sardinian government is to be applied to on the part of the British Association, with a request that measures may be taken to insure the safety of scientific men when pursuing investigations on the summits of the Alps. One of the old guides, Balmat, is to be rewarded for the services he has rendered to savans, by a testimonial of twenty-five guineas' value, voted to him by the Council of the Royal Society.

That the right man got the honour when knighthood was conferred on Mr Armstrong, is everywhere acknowledged; and that he is the right man for the post of engineer to the War Department for Rifled Ordnance, is unanimously agreed. We hear that this appointment is but a prelude to others which will place competent civilians, and not mere military men, at the head of the great manufacturing departments of the government. Economy should result from this praiseworthy change, for a civilian who has conducted a manufacturing establishment is more likely to understand it than a mere colonel. Ere long, Sir William Armstrong will be delivering cannon from his works at Elswick, on the banks of the Tyne, which are to change the system and art of war, and realise results which, to some minds, are impossibilities.—Meanwhile, Mr Warry, armourer-sergeant at Chatham, is demonstrating that ten rounds a minute can be fired from a brass gun which is but sixteen inches long, weighs not more than eleven pounds, and has the further merit of keeping cool.—The Institution of Civil Engineers have had a long and animated discussion on the ether-engine—that is, a steam-engine combining ether as a motive-power; and their conclusion appears to be that it effects a saving of 30 per cent. in coal. But there is an objection in the fact that ether evaporates, without doing duty, in hot climates; as was ascertained in the experimental trip to the Mediterranean which we noticed last year. The same saving is effected by the use of super-heated steam, as we mentioned last Month; and we call attention to the discussion that it may be known how earnestly practical men are seeking for economy and improvements in motive-power.—On one of the northern railways, experiments have been made which prove that coal-burning locomotives may also be smoke-consuming: should the required apparatus come into general use, the travelling public will be saved from a nuisance, and coke-burners must betake themselves to another line of industry.—What is to become of the farriers, now that a machine has been invented which turns out horse-shoes at the rate of sixty a minute! and what will photographers and

metallurgists say to M. Tiffereau, who declares that when in South America he converted silver into gold with no other aid than the rays of the sun?

Paper manufacturers are not yet to be left to follow their own devices, and make fortunes in their own way, if we may trust the prime-minister's reply to the deputation that prayed him to do for paper-makers that which had been done for glass-workers. And the Board of Inland Revenue—Excise, as vulgar people call it—refuse permission to an enterprising firm to introduce a new material, cheap and unlimited in supply, for the making of paper.

The delivery of the Hunterian orations—one at the College of Surgeons, the other at the Hunterian Society in the city, is a sign—besides the opening of parliament—that we are close upon the spring quarter. Seeing that the College oration always praises John Hunter, it has been suggested that the time has perhaps come for saying something on the other side of the question. Mr Smeé chose for his subject, in the city, the causes and cure of bodily debility, and shewed how, by a knowledge of chemistry, the medical practitioner may treat diseases with success which otherwise would baffle his skill. He described a simple kind of hygrometer made of ametastine—that is, blotting-paper dipped in sulphuric acid, whereby it acquires the property of expanding in moist air, and contracting in dry. 'By taking advantage of this property,' says Mr Smeé, 'I have constructed many forms of hygrometers, the most simple of which I shall endeavour to bring into general use, and if I am not greatly mistaken, it will be hereafter the concomitant of the thermometer in every home, and prevent many a traveller from catching a severe rheumatism in a damp bed.'

The discovery of vegetable parchment, which, as most readers know, is paper dipped in sulphuric acid, seems likely to lead to further useful results. We have mentioned one above; another is that, by dipping in sulphuric acid, gutta percha is rendered capable of resisting high temperatures. This is an important fact, to be turned to account by manufacturers and chemists. The purer the gutta percha, the shorter must be the time of the immersion. The effect here noticed is no doubt similar to that produced on asphalt by an intermixture of sulphur: it becomes harder and less fusible than before.

Dr Edward Smith, whose inquiries into the phenomena of respiration we noticed last year, has laid further results before the Royal Society, chiefly concerning the action of food upon the breathing. He has tried fluids of various kinds, from milk and tea to alcohol, and different kinds of solids, and noted the difference thereby produced in the exhalation of carbonic acid from the lungs. The investigations are highly important in a physiological point of view, but as yet the data are too few to establish a satisfactory theory. As regards tea, he finds that it occasions an extraordinary amount of exhalation of carbonic acid from the lungs; a result which, so far, is contrary to former experience.—Mr Arnott has published certain particulars, shewing that, although the use of chloroform saves the patients from pain in amputations, it does not necessarily save them from death afterwards. Of 590 amputations performed in four metropolitan and fourteen provincial hospitals before the introduction of chloroform, the deaths were 20 per cent.; while of 389 amputations since the employment of chloroform, they amount to 30 per cent. He considers that more care should be taken in promoting insensibility; that the doses should be administered in smaller quantities and in a way that does not hide the patient's face, or conceal the signs of death.—Professor Kussmaul has tried some curious experiments on what he calls the necrotisation of limbs, by injection of chloroform. A very small quantity injected into

an artery produces intense rigidity of the muscles; strongest where the muscular contractility is most perfect. The muscle is found to lose much of its extensile power, and its electric property, as well as to break easily. In the case of a dead body, the chloroform acts as a powerful antiseptic, and a corpse may be kept for months; but, in a living body, the injected limb dies and putrefies. It is found, moreover, that gangrene may be produced by injection of chloroform; and in these various facts there are new lines of inquiry opened to physiologists.—Instances sometimes occur of snuff-takers suffering from a form of poisoning in the nostril: M. Luitner traces them to the lead or tin in which the snuff has been kept, and shews that it exerts a marked action on those metals.

The spread of that new malady—diphtheria—adds further importance, if possible, to the mysterious question as to the origin of diseases generally. How much there is unknown in that deeply interesting subject! The cause of the potato-disease has not yet been ascertained, nor of the symptoms of weakness observable in the turnip, rendering the growth of that plant more difficult than in times past, nor of the fatal cattle murrain, nor of the silkworm disease. According to M. Lebert, the latter is accompanied by a growth of microscopic mushrooms in all the tissues of the body; and while the blood of healthy silk-worms is acid, that of unhealthy ones is alkaline. He represents the cause of the disease to be overcrowding and want of cleanliness. Feeding the worms on sugared leaves is said to be a remedy; they not only regain their health, but spin better silk, and in greater quantity than before.—In leaving this topic, we may mention a test by which growing traders at Manchester distinguish silk from cotton in cases of doubt: they dip the specimens into an ‘ammonical solution of oxide of nickel,’ which dissolves silk, but does not dissolve cotton.

Dr Haughton, who read a paper on the Oriental Bath before the British Association, at their Dublin meeting, has followed up the subject with a paper on Hot-air Baths, in which he shews that a bath of hot air is oftentimes more beneficial than water; and that from the remains which may still be seen, there is ‘abundant evidence that hundreds of years ago this kind of bath was in full operation in this very climate.’ In certain parts of Ireland—Rathlin, and on the borders of Fermanagh—there are ‘sweating-houses,’ in shape something like a Hottentot hut, to which the peasantry resort, and rid themselves of painful diseases by copious perspiration. Keep the skin in a proper condition by the use of hot-air baths, says the doctor, and it will not only throw off what is impure from within, but will absorb oxygen from without; gout, rheumatism, and diarrhoea will be mitigated in their effects. ‘I do not advocate a panacea,’ he pursues, ‘but I recommend an institution which will prevent, as well as cure, disease; which comes down to us from the most remote ages, and is now used by a large proportion of the human race; which is venerable from its antiquity, founded upon science, supported by authority, and confirmed by experience.’

Main-drainage and sewage are now all-important questions with our Metropolitan Board of Works, while from all parts of the country the word is—manures and tillage. The two questions are much more intimately related than is, even yet, commonly believed. Among the subjects for which prizes are offered by the Royal Agricultural Society we find, On tillage as a substitute for manure; On cultivation by steam; and On the causes of the increasing difficulty in turnip-growing. As we have more than once explained in the *Journal*, clay-soils may be made to produce wheat-crops year after year without manure, if dug and stirred often enough to receive the full benefit from light and air. Professor

Voelecker shews that liquid manures do little or no good on clay-soils, but are just the thing for sandy soils, as is proved by the abounding fertility of parts of Belgium and Holland, where the light lands are treated with liquid manure. Hence we see that what shall be done with the sewage, is an important question in town-drainage. To discharge the refuse into the river is a disgraceful waste, especially in the present state of our knowledge and experience; and yet we are told by some economists that town-sewage cannot be profitably employed. We hope that in the construction of the costly drainage-works required for London, it will be shewn that an annual profit may be derived from the fertilising substances, sufficient in time to repay the enormous outlay. Mr Glassford, in his pamphlet on the subject, contends that the liquid and solid excretions of the population should never enter the sewers at all, but be distributed into receivers, conveyed thence by mechanical means, and manufactured into slabs for sale. He shews that this may be accomplished by a ‘filter-system,’ which ‘admits of no communication whatever with the atmosphere at any stage of the operation, until the deposit is withdrawn from it in the form of flat, firm slabs, forty inches square, and three inches thick, to be dropped from the press into a barge for daily removal.’ Estimating the population of London at 2,700,000, the amount of solid and liquid excrement thrown into the sewers every day is about 3000 tons, of which the annual value is nearly £850,000. In these figures we see that the question is one of first-rate importance to trade and agriculture, as well as to sanitary science and the improvement of towns.

The Society which was formed last autumn for Public Readings, with Lord Brougham as president, have found their labours hitherto encouragingly successful. A number of gentlemen who can read well announce an evening meeting, admission one penny, and they read aloud selections from entertaining authors; and so a rational evening’s amusement is afforded at a trifling cost. A few seats are reserved for such persons as prefer to pay a shilling; but the object is to secure the attendance of the working-classes, and they do attend. It would perhaps hardly do to announce that the men might bring their pipes; but their wives might be allowed to bring their needle-work; and it would be a pretty sight to see the women sewing and listening. The experiment so far justifies what Sir George Grey and others said in favour of entertaining books in their speeches during last vacation. Some of our principal railways have established a library and reading society; the General Post-office has followed the example, and while the class of clerks are thus provided for, it is quite in accordance with the spirit of the times that those who work with their hands should not be neglected.

An Illuminating Art Union has been formed, to give employment to ladies in the illumination of books: a pretty art, wherein fancy and imagination may find free scope. An exhibition of the finished works is promised for next summer.—The Vernon Gallery is now removed to a place near the Sheepshanks collection at the Kensington Museum, because Marlborough House is to be got ready for the Prince of Wales. Some people fear that the remove will be final, and that the pictures will not be brought back to London. It appears to be certain, however, that the National Gallery is to remain in Trafalgar Square, where more room will be made by the departure of the Royal Academy, who, having grown rich with £170,000 in the funds, have offered to build a house for themselves, if government will give them a site. We hear that it is in contemplation to build a palatial edifice on the grounds of Burlington House, in which to lodge the Royal Academy, the Royal Society, with

other scientific societies, and perhaps a department of the civil service.

A Leviathan of literature has been launched upon us from the other side of the Atlantic—a work of a magnitude worthy of the country of the Mississippi and of Niagara—being no less than *A Dictionary of English and American Authors,* Living and Deceased*, and containing 30,000 biographies and literary notices! Only the first of the two proposed volumes has as yet been published, but that is not 'a pocket volume,' or 'a companion for a summer's ramble,' by any means. The number of authors already noticed exceeds 17,000, so that the boast expressed in the preface, that this work is intended to be to the literature of the language what a dictionary of words is to the language itself, is not unreasonable.

Thoroughly American is the prospectus, which, in insisting upon the quantity which a purchaser of this book will get for his money, informs us that it (vol. i.) consists of '1005 pages, imperial double column, minion and nonpareil type, about 200 lines on each page on an average, the volume containing upwards of two millions of words;' which, if anybody doubts, he is quite at liberty to count them himself.

Certainly it seems to us that the author has used a very charitable sieve in sifting his materials. Is it possible that there are really 175 great writers of the name of Brown or Browne? 153 Clarks or Clarkes? 110 Johnsons? or (think of this, ye Joneses, who have been so long unreasonably ashamed of your insignificance!) 189 Joneses? A large number of these gentlemen, to be sure, are citizens of the United States, where the title of 'one of the most remarkable men in this country,' is, we have read, rather easily obtained. Of the undue prominence which is given to American authors, we present this instance: Oliver Wendell Holmes occupies a whole page and half of this gigantic volume, while Robert Browning is compressed into half a column! Nevertheless, the work is doubtless a valuable contribution, and deserves high credit for the honourable ambition which suggested it, and the labour, perseverance, and research which must have been expended upon its production.

In a very interesting lecture upon the Preservation and Restoration of Books and their Bindings, delivered by Mr Leighton, this month, before the Society of Arts, we read of a process, in restoring and repairing single leaves, which greatly aids the bookbinder—namely, the splitting of sheets of paper. 'To shew how valuable this is at times, I will tell you how a rare old book was made complete, that otherwise could never have been made so, the fact being that the printer had turned his sheet the wrong way in perfecting the impression from his types—thus, every leaf was backed by text due some pages in advance or arrear, and it was not until every leaf of that sheet was split, and each page united to its proper fellow, that the book could be called complete. Little did the printer of old, when he plied his press in Spain, centuries ago, think that his error would thus have been corrected here. The rare old book was on Painting, by Pacheco, the master and father-in-law of Velasquez, and is now in the possession of Mr Stirling of Keir; having been patched and completed from a duplicate copy in the possession of the Earl Ellesmere.'

Speaking of 'dummy-doors,' sometimes absolutely necessary in a library for the concealment of closets, and the maintenance of general uniformity, Mr Leighton gives us this pleasant information. 'The titles of the works selected (for these mock-volumes) ought at once to indicate the fictitious nature of the

spot. In the collections of the Duke of Devonshire at Chatsworth, and the late Samuel Rogers, in London, these false backs were made the medium of much wit: instead of mock Miltons and spurious Shakespeares, tall Thomsons and short Spensers, fat Bacons and thin Longfellows, were to be found such books as, *The Circle Squared, Nebuchadnezzar on Grasses, The Babylon Court Guide, Sir C. Hatton on Dancing, Canute on Tidal Waves, Photographs of the Ancients*, &c.; these, with the titles of unwritten works of great authors, affording matter for thought.'

A SWIM FOR LIFE.

About twenty years ago, a man-of-war belonging to her Britannic Majesty was lying at anchor in the principal harbour of Antigua, which, as most people know, forms one of the group called the West India Islands, and belongs to the British.

It was a hot sultry day in the beginning of June. The heavy fog which at that time of year occasionally hangs like a curtain over everything, had been dispersed by the heat of the sun's rays, and like a retreating enemy, was rolling slowly back to the horizon. Not a breath of wind stirred the water, not a sea-gull flapped its wing round the ship. The long pennon drooped lazily from the mast, as though sharing in the general languor of nature. The surface of the sea was like a mirror, only disturbed by an occasional black fin, that rippled lazily through the water for a little distance, and disappeared as its possessor sunk again into the depths beneath. As the sun, however, rose towards the meridian, a breeze began to spring up—not cool and steady, but coming now and then in irregular puffs, and hot as the breath of an oven. Notwithstanding the suspicious appearance of the weather, and the rapid fall of the thermometer, a party of midshipmen asked permission to take the pinnace for a few hours' sail, and obtained it, but on the condition that they should not go far from the ship. The party, consisting of six middies and two mates, started, accordingly, in great spirits, notwithstanding the warning growls of some of the old tars. Thoughtless and fearless as English sailors generally are, they paid little attention to the freshening wind, and the fast altering appearance of the sky. The tide was running out with great force, and they were soon outside the mouth of the harbour, and slipping down the side of the island with a fair wind, and with the full strength of the ebb. One of the mates was at the helm, a middy with the sheets, the rest stretched lazily about the boat, smoking and talking, when, like a thunderbolt, a violent squall struck them, and the light boat capsized in an instant. All its crew were immersed, but soon made their appearance again, swimming like corks on the surface; and in a short time were collected like a flock of water-fowl on the keel of their upturned boat. When they had shaken the water out of their eyes, looked about them a little, and found their numbers diminished, they held a consultation on their condition, and the chances for and against their rescue. The prospect of affairs was certainly not inspiring, and to people possessed of less buoyant dispositions than themselves, would have appeared hopeless. They were clinging to the wreck of a small boat, their ship was hidden from sight by clouds of rain—for the storm had now come on in all its fury—and the land was invisible from the same cause. The sea was rising fast, the wind blowing a perfect hurricane, and, worse than all, they were drifting with full force of wind and tide into the Caribbean Sea; once there, out of the track of vessels and far from any land, their fate would be certain. Such being the state of things, many hopes were expressed that the ship would send boats in search of them. Comfortable suggestions, but

* Allibone's *Dictionary of Authors*. Child and Peterson, Philadelphia; Trübner and Co., London.

with too little foundation. At last, the two eldest determined upon a plan, which nothing but the desperate emergency of the case could have suggested. It was to attempt to swim ashore. The land was about three miles from them; they were both first-rate swimmers, and, as far as the distance was concerned, might have attempted it on a calm day without much fear of failure; but in a heavy sea the case was different, and both wind and tide, though not dead against them, combined to sweep them down under the lee of the island. Above all, the place swarmed with sharks. Nothing daunted, however, these two brave fellows stripped to the skin, and, after a short good-bye, and a hurried exhortation to the big ones to hold the little ones on, and all to keep up their pluck, they leaped into the sea.

I cannot describe with what feelings they left their little boat, which, though a frail support enough, seemed like an ark of refuge, when compared to the pitiless waves, to whose mercy they committed themselves. They had both resolved to stick to one another as long as they lasted, both for mutual encouragement, and as some sort of protection against the much-dreaded sharks. For nearly an hour they swam on, sometimes lying on their backs to rest, sometimes striking out again for dear life. Up to this time, although much fatigued, they had seen no sharks; and they were encouraged by a glimpse, through a break in the gale, of the land, as it rose dark and forbidding above its white fringe of breakers. But all at once, without a moment's notice, they were surrounded on all sides by the black fins; an exclamation of despair forced itself from them at this sight, and both waited in agony of suspense for the moments of pain which were to end their existence; still they mechanically swam on, and, to their surprise, the sharks, although playing all round them, did not touch them. They made continual short rushes at them, and when the poor fellows closed their eyes in all the agony of death, passed by them; or turning on their backs, they would open their monstrous jaws and close their teeth with a loud clash within a few inches of their victim's body. One of these men said afterwards that he felt at that time like a mouse in the power of a cat, that plays with the poor wretch before she makes her supper off it. Still, however, they swam on, the thunder roaring, the lightning flashing above them, struggling against a heavy sea, terrific wind, and strong tide, tired and exhausted, with these horrid monsters swimming round them. One often reads of nights of terror that turn a man's hair gray. Many of these may be considered peaceful, when compared with the horrors of that five hours' swim. At last, however, they succeeded in nearing the extreme end of the island; the sharks one by one left them; the last, however, made a farewell plunge at the lad nearest him, and though he missed him with his teeth, struck him a violent blow in the stomach with his strong tail. The poor fellow called out; and his companion, who was swimming a few yards in advance, though thoroughly exhausted, returned to his friend's assistance; he supported him until he recovered sufficiently to proceed, and at last they once more touched the firm ground. They struggled up the beach, and lay down for a few minutes utterly worn out; but the thought of their comrades clinging to that upturned boat roused them to fresh exertions. After staggering on for about half a mile in the direction of some houses, they met a number of negroes, who, as our heroes were entirely naked, attacked them with stones, and they would in all probability have fallen victims to this 'nigger' sense of decency, had not an officer fortunately passed by at the moment and recognised them.

In a few minutes, their story was told, and prompt measures were adopted to rescue the remainder of the

party. Boats were quickly launched under the lee of the island, and the two mates, although nearly dead from exhaustion, persisted in embarking in them. The danger was not yet over, for the sea was running mountains high; the gale had little abated, and the night was coming on fast. After a long and hard pull, nothing could be seen of the missing ones. It had become quite dark, and they were beginning to despair. One boat had already turned towards the shore, when, by the light of a vivid flash, they saw on the crest of a huge black wave the dismantled boat with its knot of half-drowned boys. They soon pulled up to it, and found to their great joy the number complete. They, too, had begun to despair; had feared their two brave comrades had perished; were wearied and half suffocated by the constant seas that were continually breaking over them; and some were talking of loosing their hold when the timely relief arrived.

On reaching the shore, the two brave mates gave in. The reaction which followed their exertions and exposure was great and dangerous. One died, a victim to his heroism; the other lived, but his health was seriously injured, and his powers of mind affected by all that he had gone through; for months afterwards he would start up in his bed with a shriek of terror as he saw, in all the vivid reality of dreamland, those monstrous sharks glaring at him, and heard the gnash of their sharp teeth.

This wonderful escape can only be accounted for by the fact, that the spot where they landed was the site of the slaughter-house for the troops, and that the sharks were so sated with the offal thrown into the sea at that time, that even the unusual delicacy of 'white man' could not tempt them. If, however, only a few drops of blood had tinged the water, the case would have been very different; for sharks, like beasts of prey, are roused to fury at the sight of it, and in the condition of these two poor fellows, the slightest scratch would have been instantly fatal to them.

CHARITY.

O Love, how wondrous thou and holy;
When nought on earth hath power to quell

The iron might of melancholy,

One touch of thine hath snapt the spell.

One vigil by a fevered bed—

One solace given to heart opprest—

One pang assuaged, one aching head

With gentlest soothing lulled to rest:

To weary age one fond caress,

Poor guerdon for the love of years—

One smile at childhood's playfulness,

Or patient care to dry its tears;

Or less than these—the common flow

Of simple, self-forgetting mirth,

When veils the heart its inner woe,

So not to cloud the social hearth :

These, when, as locked in polar ice,

Lifeless and crushed the heart has lain—

These, like a breath from paradise,

Have warmed it into life again.

O gentlest minstrel! thou canst tell

What best can soothe the troubled breast:

'He prayeth well who loveth well!

He prayeth best who loveth best!'

E.